



# ZIKA PROGRAM EASTERN AND SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN

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In February 2016, the World Health Organization declared that clusters of Zika-associated microcephaly and other neurological disorders detected in Brazil constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. USAID Zika programming in the Agency's Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) region began in September 2016 through a community engagement partnership and has expanded to support regional and national public health institutions with targeted assistance. USAID's ESC Zika program officially launched in Trinidad in December 2017 and is being implemented across 11 countries through September 2019, including Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

By investing in Zika prevention, control and innovation USAID is helping strengthen the Eastern and Southern Caribbean Region's capacity to respond to the current epidemic and future disease threats. USAID's focus is to protect individuals, particularly pregnant women, from Zika by:

- Controlling mosquitoes that spread the virus;
- Increasing awareness of how the virus is transmitted and how to prevent infection;
- Supporting health services for potentially affected women and children; and
- Working with USG counterparts to support disease detection and surveillance.

USAID/ESC and USAID/Washington are closely collaborating with Ministries of Health and civil society organizations to implement the Zika Project in the Caribbean. USAID also partners with the Caribbean Public Health Association (CARPHA) to support regional efforts to strengthen cross-country collaboration for disease surveillance, outbreak response and public health sector capacity building.

## **VECTOR MANAGEMENT**

Through the Zika AIRS Project (ZAP), USAID's support strengthens the capacity of partner governments to implement vector control programs and to monitor and eliminate mosquito populations, particularly the *Aedes Aegypti* species that transmits Zika. Technical assistance is provided to Ministries of Health in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating vector control activities in Barbados, Guyana, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, and Antigua and Barbuda. ZAP conducts training on entomological monitoring and insecticide effectiveness for mosquito control, supplying specific equipment needed for entomological activities, and developing national guidelines for integrated vector control management. In some countries (Guyana, for example), ZAP is also providing technical assistance to strengthen environmental compliance and safety measures for insecticide use. This work is complemented by USAID's partnership with the Pan American Health Organization and CARPHA that supports Ministries of Health to adopt regional guidelines for integrated vector management.

## **MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH INTERVENTIONS AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

USAID is integrating high quality, evidence-based Zika guidelines and resources for health providers into existing family planning, antenatal and obstetric and newborn care public health systems. The Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) is leveraging existing partnerships with the Latin American and Caribbean Neonatal Alliance, the Caribbean Regional Midwives Association and other leading technical experts in the Americas to efficiently deploy short-term technical assistance. MCSP builds the capacity of Ministries of Health to train health care workers on essential care for Zika-affected infants and on providing quality psychosocial and other support services to Zika affected families. MCSP supports the Ministries of Health to adapt and apply global therapeutic early stimulation approaches for infants with Congenital Zika Syndrome. National level work is happening in Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada and Saint Lucia. At the regional level, MCSP is supporting CARPHA in the design of an integrated Zika pregnancy registry and will host regional and national workshops on essential care of infants affected by Zika and critical support for affected families. MCSP will add to the available scientific evidence for the Caribbean region through its support to the Windward Islands Education and Research Foundation to track the health outcomes of infants born to mothers infected by Zika.

## **SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION**

Through the Support for International Family Planning Organizations II - Population Services International (SIFPO II-PSI) project, USAID supports Ministries of Health and civil society organizations to educate families and communities on personal protection to prevent the spread of Zika infection. In Guyana, the project is implementing a multi-media risk communications campaign and is strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Health to develop, monitor, and evaluate the impact of social behavior change interventions. Mass media and social media campaigns targeting women of reproductive age and pregnant women and their partners about the risks of Zika infection are being developed and aired in Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

USAID supports the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) across all 11 countries. IFRC partners with its Red Cross National Societies within the Eastern and Southern Caribbean to implement intense community level action to reduce the transmission of Zika. IFRC engages community leaders to educate families about Zika and to coordinate clean-up campaigns to eliminate mosquito breeding sites to prevent the spread of Zika infection. IFRC also provides psychosocial support to women and families affected by Zika. IFRC activities empower communities to adopt local solutions to promote personal protection and get rid of mosquito breeding sites through school-based activities and public events such as health fairs and carnival celebrations.

## **INNOVATIONS**

With funding from USAID, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is providing CARPHA with laboratory strengthening support to improve detection of Zika across the region as well as field epidemiology and risk communication training for Ministry of Health personnel. Additionally, two awardees of the Combatting Zika and Future Threats Grand Challenge are working in the region. In Guyana, the Barcelona Institute for Global Health is developing an innovative electric force field technology for mosquito repulsion, and in Trinidad and Tobago the Trustees of Indiana University are testing novel yeast-based methods of eliminating *Aedes aegypti* larvae.

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